



COASTAL AND ESTUARINE LAND CONSERVATION REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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I. Introduction

Coastal areas support the nation's largest and often fastest-growing population centers. They also house the natural infrastructure, such as forests, wetlands, floodplains, and dunes, that helps protect these coastal communities from storm impacts, support productive fisheries, coastal recreation, and other coast-dependent economic activities. The Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) provides matching funds to State and local governments to purchase, or acquire conservation easements on, threatened coastal and estuarine lands.

The CELCP was authorized "for the purpose of protecting important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural, undeveloped, or recreational state to other uses."

The CELCP helps advance the national goals and priorities of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) (16 U.S.C. 1455a(e)) including:

- Protection of coastal ecosystems including wetlands, corals, and natural shorelines;
- Preservation of natural features that provide storm protection such as dunes and barrier islands;
- Minimizing loss of life and property by directing development out of high risk areas;
- Safeguarding coastal water quality;
- Preservation of historic, cultural, and archaeological features;
- Protection of aesthetic coastal features such as scenic vistas; and
- Providing opportunities for public access to the coast.

The CELCP also advances the goal of the GLRI to protect and restore Great Lakes aquatic and terrestrial habitats, based on priorities identified in the GLRI Action Plan II, available at <http://go.usa.gov/3SMzF>, which places a major focus on: cleaning up Great Lakes Areas of Concern (see <http://go.usa.gov/3SMJB>); preventing and controlling invasive species; reducing nutrient runoff that contributes to harmful/nuisance algal blooms; and restoring habitat to protect native species.

II. Priorities

Within the CELCP, priority will be given to projects that are designed to protect properties that:

- can be effectively managed and protected;
- have significant ecological value;
- have a demonstrated need for protection; and
- can successfully leverage funds among participating entities, including Federal programs, regional organizations, State and other governmental units, landowners, corporations, or private organizations.

Of the projects that meet the above standards, priority will also be given to projects that:

- are designed to protect properties under an imminent threat of conversion to a use that will degrade or diminish their natural, undeveloped, or recreational state;
- serve to mitigate the adverse impacts caused by coastal population growth in the coastal environment; and/or
- reflect the land conservation priority area(s) identified in the State's CELCP plan, including the goals and objectives of its coastal management plan and National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) management plans approved under the CZMA, or regional or State Watershed Protection Plan.

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In addition, in support of the Great Lakes Action Plan II, priority will be given to projects that support the following GLRI priorities:

- Protect, restore and enhance Great Lakes coastal wetlands;
- Protect, restore and enhance shorelines, riparian corridors, and other coastal habitats in the Great Lakes basin; or
- Implement management actions necessary to remove Beneficial Use Impairments and delist Areas of Concern.

III. Funding Availability

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC) anticipates that approximately \$2,000,000 in FY 2016 funds may be available through the EPA's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative for CELCP land acquisition projects in Great Lakes States, subject to the availability of fiscal year (FY) 2016 appropriations. Each eligible State's designated CELCP lead agency may each submit up to four projects for this competition. The maximum amount that may be requested for the Federal share of each project is \$1,500,000. Typical CELCP awards are expected to range between \$100,000 and \$1,000,000, depending on the size, location, and type of project.

The exact number of awards and amount of funds for each award depends on the funding availability, funding amounts requested by applicants, as well as the merits and ranking of projects, and will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives.

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this federal funding opportunity, or that any proposal will be selected for funding.

A. Project Award Period

The standard award period is 18 months and may be extended an additional 18 months, but not to exceed three years, if circumstances warrant.

Projects funded under this announcement are anticipated to have an award start date between September 1, 2016 and October 1, 2016.

B. Eligible Applicants

- Coastal units of government including cities, counties, villages, and townships;
- State Colleges and Universities;
- Tribal governments;
- Conservation Districts.

C. Match Requirement

Federal funds awarded under CELCP require non-federal match at a 1:1 ratio. Match may be in the form of cash, in-kind contributions, such as the value of donated lands or interests therein, or a combination of the two. Federal funds may not be used as match.

D. Application Deadline

Complete applications must be postmarked, or hand-delivered, no later than December 23, 2015.

E. Application Submittal

Provide an electronic copy of the application (MS Word or text file) and associated materials as described below on a CD or USB flash drive (non-returnable) with a hardcopy cover letter signed by an authorized representative of the applicant on the applicant's letterhead.

Note: faxed or emailed submissions will not be accepted, and late or incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.

IV. Eligible CELCP Projects

The CELCP provides support for acquisition of fee simple interests in lands or conservation easements from willing sellers within eligible States (as defined in Eligible Applicants, above). In order to be eligible, a project must:

- Protect important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural, undeveloped, or recreational state to other uses;
- Be located within a State's designated CELCP area (as identified in its CELCP plan), which is based on its coastal watershed or coastal zone boundary;
- Provide non-Federal matching funds in the form of cash or in-kind contributions at a ratio of 1:1;
- Provide for non-Federal public ownership by the grant recipient or sub-recipient for conservation in perpetuity. If the grant recipient is a State agency that does not have authority to hold title to lands, the property may be held by another State agency that has the authority and mission to own and manage land for conservation purposes in a manner consistent with the CELCP. (Note: Third party in-kind match properties may be held by a qualified non-governmental organization for the purposes of conservation);
- Provide for public access or other public benefit, as appropriate and consistent with resource protection;
- Advance the goals, objectives, and implementation of the State's CELCP plan, including goals and objectives that relate to the coastal management plan or program, NERR management plans approved under the CZMA, national objectives of the CZMA, or a regional or State watershed protection plan for States with approved coastal management plans;
- Acquire property or conservation easements from willing sellers;
- Be consistent with a State's coastal management program approved under the CZMA; and
- Complement working waterfront needs, to the extent practicable.

V. Eligible Uses of CELCP Funds

CELCP funds (i.e., the Federal share) may be used for:

- Acquisition of properties or interests in properties (conservation easements) from willing sellers, including direct expenses relating to the acquisition of lands under the CELCP. Costs to be paid from the Federal share must be documented, and expended within the period of performance unless approved for reimbursement as a pre-award cost.

* The negotiated price of the property or conservation easement should be based on the fair market value as established by a complete and self-contained appraisal prepared by an independent State-approved appraiser. Appraisals must reflect nationally recognized appraisal standards, including the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisition (the Yellow Book). If an appraisal has not been completed at the time a project proposal is submitted, the applicant may propose a good-faith estimate of the cost for the project based on market value or agreement with the willing seller. However, if the project is selected for funding, an appraisal will be required before funds can be released. The amount of the grant cannot exceed the estimated cost in the project application. If the appraised value of the property is higher than the estimated cost in the project proposal, the applicant must make up the difference. If the appraised value is lower than the estimated cost, NOAA will reduce the Federal share of the project as appropriate. More information can be found in section 4.2.d of the CELCP Guidelines.

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* For projects that propose to acquire more than one property, parcels must be located in the same vicinity, be substantially related in terms of conservation values, or have other direct physical or strategic connection (for example, acquiring multiple properties that will be assembled into a single greenway). NOAA recommends that applicants limit the scope to acquiring no more than five separate parcels (including parcels that would be acquired directly with CELCP funds, as well as those that would be counted as in-kind match). Properties containing multiple parcels covered under a single appraisal, title report and survey plat could count as one parcel (e.g., a subdivided property with the same landowner).

- Direct and indirect costs for administering the grant award.

* Note that administrative costs may be included in the Federal share, the matching share, or a combination thereof, but the total amount allocated for costs of this nature may not exceed the value of five percent of the requested Federal share for the project, e.g., a proposal requesting \$500,000 in CELCP funds may include a maximum of \$25,000 for administrative costs in the budget. Whether included in the Federal share or the match share, such costs must be incurred within the period of performance. Such costs may include time spent by staff for project planning, implementation, and review, as well as costs for certain initial land stewardship activities, such as signage, public safety, or other stewardship purposes.

* Expenses such as appraisals, surveys, title opinions, and other direct transaction costs, are considered acquisition costs and do not count toward the five percent limit for administrative costs. If an application includes indirect costs, the amount must be based on the indirect cost rate negotiated and approved by the applicant's cognizant agency for indirect costs. Applicants requesting indirect costs are required to submit a copy of their indirect cost rate agreement. If an award recipient has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency, the negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the DOC.

- Allowable grant costs are limited to costs necessary and reasonable to achieve the approved objectives of a grant and must be consistent with general cost principles for grants awarded by Federal agencies, as specified in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, available at <http://go.usa.gov/c3pre>.

NOAA will not reimburse expenses that have been incurred prior to the start of a grant award, except in the following cases. Generally, applicants may receive reimbursement for certain costs incurred within 90 days prior to the grant's official start date if such costs are requested in the application and the applicant can demonstrate it is necessary to incur the costs prior to the official award start date. Pre-award costs eligible for consideration include costs necessary for conducting appraisals, title work, and environmental assessments. The cost of land acquisition may also be reimbursed as a pre-award cost if the acquisition occurred between the selection date (the date that NOAA selects its list of projects for funding) and the start date for an approved grant award. If an applicant incurs costs before the effective date of the grant, they do so at their own risk.

CELCP funds may not be used for:

- Funding long-term operations, maintenance, and management of the land (above those costs allowed for initial land stewardship);
- Construction of buildings, boat launching facilities, docks or piers, shoreline armoring, or other facilities;
- Research;
- Outreach and education;

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- Acquisition of lands, or interests in lands, that completely restrict access to specific persons (e.g., non-residents of a community);
- Acquisition of lands, or interests in lands, to comply with mandatory or compensatory mitigation for recent, pending or future habitat losses resulting from the actions of agencies, organizations, companies, or individuals;
- Enforcing fish, wildlife, or other regulations, either solely or primarily, except when necessary for the accomplishment of approved project purposes;
- Acquisition of land for active recreation, such as sports facilities, water parks, playgrounds, or similar uses; or
- Reimbursement of expenses that have been incurred prior to the start of a grant award, except those approved as pre-award costs.

VI. Information for Applicants

Proposal information will not be kept confidential. Grant proposals are considered public information under the Michigan Freedom of Information Act, PA 442 of 1976, as amended.

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a grant agreement with the Department of Environmental Quality which includes standard terms and conditions which are not subject to modifications. Failure of a successful applicant to accept these obligations will result in cancellation of the grant award.

VII. Application Package

Applications can be no more than 10 pages in length with text no smaller than 11-point font size. The 10-page limit does not include the Supplemental Elements. Supplemental Elements should not total more than 30 total pages, not including NEPA forms. The total electronic file size of the proposal narrative and appendices combined should not exceed five megabytes in storage space.

Applications submitted to:

Michigan Coastal Zone Management Program
Office of the Great Lakes
Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 30473
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7973

For information on Michigan CELCP, contact:

Alisa Gonzales-Pennington
Coastal Zone Management Program
517-284-5038
gonzalesa@michigan.gov

Application:

Each proposal must include each of the following required elements: CELCP Project Application Checklist, Project Description/Scope of Work, and Project Budget. Templates for the required elements can be found on the Applying for a Grant section of the CELCP Web site at www.coast.noaa.gov/czm/landconservation/applying.

A. Project Description/Scope of Work

The following information must be provided for the project site and any parcel that is to be used as match; incomplete information may prevent a project's selection for an award. (Please note that an Environmental Data Sharing Plan (as described in section VI of this FFO) is NOT required to be submitted with CELCP land acquisition project proposals.)

1. Information on the project site's size, location, and relationship to coastal or estuarine features, environmental significance, and primary purpose of the project (i.e., ecological, conservation, recreation, aesthetic, or historic).
2. How the proposed project meets the State and national criteria and its expected benefits in terms of coastal and estuarine land conservation, and specifically: how the project supports the priorities identified in the State's CELCP plan; the legal rights to be acquired, and any conversion threats to the property; pre-existing uses of the property and the nature of those uses (including existing structures, leases, etc.); and activities or uses planned for the project site after acquisition and how those activities/uses are consistent with the long-term protection of the site's ecological or other values.
3. A strategy for long-term stewardship, including information on continuing support for maintenance and enforcement against illegal uses and, if restoration is proposed, when and how that will be accomplished.
4. Timeline with discrete benchmarks for completing the project within the requested award period.
5. Photographs of the project site (approximately 2-10) that document the values described in the text of this element.

B. Project Budget and Justification of Proposed Costs

Following the categories and formats in the NOAA grants package (Form SF-424A), provide a brief narrative justification of the budget that includes a breakdown of project costs and source of proposed matching funds. The CELCP Project Budget template may be used to provide detailed budget information, such as a repeat of the information in Form SF-424A along with more details. Detailed budget guidance provided by the NOAA Grants Management Division is accessible under: coast.noaa.gov/funding/pdf/forms/budget-narrative-guidance-GMD-04.09.2015.pdf. If the overall cost of the project exceeds the amount of requested CELCP funds plus matching share, please provide a breakout of costs for the entire project (e.g., including other sources of funding that will be used to complete the project). Land acquisition costs must be based on appraised value or other estimate of fair market value. Section 2.5 of the CELCP Guidelines outlines eligible and ineligible uses of CELCP funds. These are also described under Eligibility Information in section III of this announcement. The project budget should also specify whether this project has been submitted for other sources of Federal funding, and if so, which Federal program(s) and year(s).

The budget narrative should also clearly identify the cost of separable elements of the proposed work and identify the elements of the project that the cooperator would recommend for revision or elimination if sufficient funding is not available for all proposed activities.

Include detailed budget information regarding subawards and indicate the basis for the cost estimates in the narrative. Describe products or services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project.

Detailed budget information includes:

- Name of subrecipient, contractor, or vendor. Include the name of the qualified subrecipient, contractor, affiliation, and contact.
- Method of Selection. For acquisitions to be determined, indicate if the selection involves competition, sole source with justification, sealed bids, small purchases, or micro purchases (see 2 CFR 200.320)
- Period of Performance. Include the dates for the performance period. If it involves a number of tasks, include the performance period for each task.
- Scope of Work. List and describe the specific activities or tasks to be performed.
- Criteria for Measuring Accountability. Include reporting schedule.
- Itemized Budget for subawards. Include categories used in program budget.

C. CELCP Project Application Checklist

The CELCP Project Application Checklist enables NOAA to determine if a project may have any adverse impacts and whether additional information may be required to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) or other applicable Federal laws, regulations or policies, as described in Section VI.B. of this announcement. The checklist must be signed by a representative of the eligible public entity (grant recipient or sub-recipient) that will receive funds to execute the project. The checklist is available with CELCP application materials at www.Grants.gov or at www.coast.noaa.gov/czm/landconservation/applying/.

D. Project Location and Site Maps

A minimum of two maps should be submitted: (1) a regional map showing the general location of the project, and (2) a map or aerial photo of the project site that shows the location and extent of the proposed acquisition, its relationship to significant natural features, and adjacent land uses.

VIII. SUPPLEMENTAL ELEMENTS

The supplemental elements may be provided as part of the initial application, but are not required at this stage. However, if the project is selected for funding, these supplemental elements would be required to be submitted and reviewed before NOAA can release the grant funds (see section 4.4 of the CELCP Guidelines).

While not required at this stage, submitting one or more of these items with the project proposal may help substantiate the project's readiness. Examples and templates for Supplemental Elements are available at: www.coast.noaa.gov/czm/landconservation/managing/.

A. Documentation of Willingness or Intent to Sell

The applicant must submit a letter from the seller affirming that s/he is a willing participant in negotiations to sell the property at a mutually agreeable price. If the property was previously acquired (as in the case of a property being used as banked in-kind match), the applicant may submit an affidavit documenting that the purchase was not the result of a forced taking or threat of condemnation, in place of a letter from the seller. Note that this element is not required for match properties held by non-profit organizations, which do not have legal authority to acquire property through condemnation.

B. Evidence of Agreement

The applicant must submit documentation verifying the terms of the purchase, such as a contract, purchase & sale agreement, or option, as described in section 4.2.f. of the CELCP Guidelines.

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C. Appraisal

The applicant must submit a complete and self-contained appraisal establishing the fair market value of the property. The appraisal must be developed in accordance with the Uniform Standards of the Professional Appraisal Practice

(www.appraisalfoundation.org/imis/TAF/Standards/Appraisal_Standards/TAF/USPAP.aspx) and the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisition (Yellow Book) (www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/enrd/legacy/2015/04/13/Uniform-Appraisal-Standards.pdf).

D. Survey

The applicant should submit a survey of the property to be acquired.

E. Evidence of Title

The applicant must submit documentation that shows that the seller is the legal owner of the property and identifies any easements or other encumbrances on the property to be acquired. Examples of such documentation include an attorney title opinion or property report from a title insurance company.

F. Draft Deed(s) and/or Conservation Easement(s)

The applicant must provide draft of deeds containing the required CELCP restriction language and copies of other easements or use agreements that may affect long-term use of the property.

G. Certification that Project Complements Working Waterfronts

The applicant must submit certification from the participating State's CELCP lead agency that, to the extent practicable, the proposed project complements (e.g., does not conflict with or impede) working waterfront needs.

IX. Budget Overview Table – Suggested Format:

Please fill out a Budget Overview Table only if the total cost of the project is greater than the requested CELCP funding (plus required matching funds). Otherwise, please fill out only the CELCP Budget Table.

Using the template below, please identify the costs associated for the full project, including funding from other sources.

Category	Amount (<i>Note of cash or in-kind value of land/services</i>)	Funding Source(s) (<i>Include information from all contributors to the project</i>)	Funds Already Expended? (<i>yes/no</i>) If so, when?
	\$		
TOTAL COST:			

(Suggested Categories: Land, Appraisals, Title Opinion, etc.)

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CELCP Budget Table – Suggested Format:

Using the template below, please identify the costs associated only with requested CELCP funding and required matching funds.

Category	Federal Share from CELCP	State/Local Matching Share	Total	Funding Source (for Non-Federal Share) (<i>Note whether funding is from cash or in-kind value of land or services</i>)	Funds Already Expended? (yes/no) when?
Land Acquisition	\$	\$	\$		
TOTAL COST:					

(Suggested Categories: Land, Appraisals, Title Opinion, etc.)